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TEPSA

Trans European Policy Studies Association

REPORT

EU@Work Seminar on European Affairs

Brussels

19-22 November 2019





INTRODUCTION

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On 19-22 November 2019, TEPSA organised the EU@Work Seminar on European Affairs in Brussels, at the heart of EU politics. Funded by the **Europe for Citizens** programme of the **European Commission**, this 4-day seminar offered 16 excellent **undergraduate students** an opportunity to gain first-hand insights from researchers, EU practitioners, policymakers and officials on the role and functioning of **EU institutions** and on the state of play of the main **EU policies**.

The seminar was organised under the academic lead of **Dr. Ilke Toygür** (Analyst at the Elcano Royal Institute and Adjunct Professor at the University Carlos III of Madrid) and combined expert lectures and visits of key EU institutions and other organisations. The seminar included visits to and meetings with:

ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

- The **European Commission**
- The **Council of the European Union**
- The **European Parliament**
- The **European External Action Service (EEAS)**
- The **House of European History**
- The **European Solidarity Corps**



DAY 1

OPENING OF THE SEMINAR

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE BY ILKE TOYGÜR

INFO SESSION ON THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

The first day kicked off with an **introduction** to TEPSA and the seminar's program. The speakers introduced themselves as well as the students, who explained their background, their interest in European integration and expressed their expectations of the seminar. The group was formed by **16 bachelor's students** from 16 different **EU and non-EU countries**.

The first lecture by **Ilke Toygür**, Academic Coordinator of the seminar and analyst at Elcano Royal Institute, served as an introduction to the European Union as a whole. Dr Toygür explained the **EU's institutional infrastructure**, how the decision-making process develops throughout the institutions and the practical significance of the European Union in our contemporary world.

The lecture was followed by a welcome drink at Ultime Atome, a typical Belgian bar where students also attended an **info session** on the **European Solidarity Corps**. **Lope Gallego**, Programme Manager at the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission, presented the opportunities offered through the ESC4Y program, explained how to register and offered his advice on how to submit an application. **Giulia Bordin**, former European Solidarity Corps participant, talked about her **personal experience** as volunteer in Brussels and answered the students' questions.



Lope Gallego and Giulia Bordin encourage the students to participate in the European Solidarity Corps program.



DAY 2

LECTURE BY ILKE TOYGÜR

VISIT TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

VISIT TO THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

At the beginning of the second day, students attended the lecture “The **European Commission**: initiator of the EU legislation and the guardian of the Treaties”. Dr Toygür described the role and structure of this institution while also focusing on its supranational character, the election of the Commission’s President and the college of commissioners. During the lecture, students were divided into smaller groups and analysed the **Political Guidelines for Next European Commission 2019-2024** by Ursula von der Leyen.

Thereafter, the group visited the European Commission, where an EU official gave a **presentation** on its functioning and the legislative process. Students had the opportunity to ask several questions mainly on EU’s budget and career opportunities in the institutions.

In the afternoon the EU@Work Seminar participants headed to the **Council of the European Union**. They were welcomed in the **Visitors’ Centre**, where they could watch videos, answer to quizzes and read some information material on the institution. A presentation by an EU official followed, introducing both the Council of the EU and the European Council. The day closed with a visit to **Europa Building**, where EU leaders gather during EU Council meetings.



Group picture at the Visitors’ Centre of the European Commission.

At the end of the day Agnese Olmati and Gil Kaufman, TEPSA’s Project Assistants, presented the **traineeship opportunities** offered in the EU institutions and explained how to apply.



DAY 3

LECTURE BY ILKE TOYGÜR

VISIT TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

VISIT TO THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE

The third day of the seminar started with a lecture touching upon the **European Council** and the **Council of the EU**. Participants further familiarised with the institutions they visited the day before: Dr Toygür provided a comprehensive explanation of the co-decision procedure, highlighting the role of the Council's President, the importance of permanent representations and the work done at the COREPER level. During the lecture, students were also introduced to the **European Parliament**. While addressing its functioning and importance, different topics were discussed in the group, including 2019 elections and citizens' participation. Students exchanged their impressions on issues such as transnational lists, voter turnout and democratic deficit.

After the lecture, the group visited the European Parliament where an EU official presented the institution and provided many details on its structure and daily work. Moreover, students had the opportunity to visit the **hemicycle** of the Parliament.

During the afternoon the group headed to the **European External Action Service (EEAS)**. First, students were introduced to the EEAS by an EU official who presented the priorities, tasks and challenges of the EEAS. Thereafter, a policy officer gave an overview on **Turkey-EU relations** and answered many questions on the future of enlargement, obstacles for Turkey's accession to the European Union and the Cyprus issue.



An EU official presents the European Parliament and answers the students' questions.



DAY 4

VISIT TO THE HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION IN THE GROUP

FARAWELL LUNCH

The last visit of the seminar saw the participants having a guided tour at the **House of European History**. The museum focuses on European historical developments from the 18th century onwards and highlights how different theories, values and circumstances affected the evolution of Europe as a whole. Students could therefore deepen their knowledge of the processes and events which led to European integration.

Students later attended the final lecture of the seminar, during which they learnt about the **EU's geopolitical approach**. They had a fruitful discussion with Ilke Toygür on issues related to EU foreign policy, migration and the EU's relation with NATO.

The last session included **final remarks** from the seminar coordinators Ilke Toygür and Giulia Bonacquisti and **feedback** from the participants, who were invited to share their opinions on the seminar and to complete an anonymous questionnaire.



Many questions arose during the lecture by Ilke Toygür.

TEPSA would like to thank the participants for their contribution to the success of the seminar and for bringing their knowledge, opinions and enthusiasm. We are particularly grateful to all the practitioners for the time devoted to our group, for accepting to host us at their institutions and for sharing with us insights from their daily work. Finally, TEPSA would like to thank the Academic Coordinator, Ilke Toygür, for enriching the seminar with her expertise and for making the lectures dynamic moments of fruitful discussion.



EU@WORK SEMINAR ON EU AFFAIRS

19-22 November 2019, Brussels

AGENDA

TUESDAY 19 NOVEMBER

Venue: Fondation Universitaire, Room E. Francqui, Rue d'Egmont 11

14:30 – 15:00

REGISTRATION & COFFEE

15:00 – 16:00

OPENING & INTRODUCTION TO THE SEMINAR by Ilke Toygür (Academic Coordinator of the Seminar & Elcano Royal Institute) and Giulia Bonacquisti (TEPSA)

16:00 – 17:30

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE by Ilke Toygür: “The EU’s institutional infrastructure and decision-making process: an introduction”

18:00

WELCOME DRINKS AND INFO SESSION ON THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS with

- Lope Gallego (Programme Manager, Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission)
- Giulia Bordin (former European Solidarity Corps participant)

Venue: Ultime Atome, Rue Saint-Boniface 14



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WEDNESDAY 20 NOVEMBER

09:00 – 10:30

LECTURE by Ilke Toygür: “The European Commission: initiator of the EU legislation and the guardian of the Treaties”

Venue: Fondation Universitaire, Room E. Francqui, Rue d'Egmont 11

11:00 – 13:00

VISIT TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION with an official from the European Commission

Venue: European Commission Visitors' Centre, Charlemagne building, Rue de la Loi 170

13:00 – 14:00

LUNCH BREAK

Venue: Pulp Sandwich Bar, Avenue d'Auderghem 9

14:00 – 16:00

VISIT TO THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION with an official from the Council of the EU

Venue: Council of the European Union, Justus Lipsius building, Rue de la Loi 175

16:30 – 18:00

DISCUSSION: “Opportunities for traineeships at EU institutions” by Agnese Olmati and Gil Kaufman (Project Assistants at TEPSA)

Venue: Fondation Universitaire, Room E. Francqui, Rue d'Egmont 11

THURSDAY 21 NOVEMBER

09:00 – 09:45

LECTURE by Ilke Toygür: “The Council of the European Union, key decision maker, and the European Council, the driver of the EU's political agenda”

Venue: Fondation Universitaire, Room E. Francqui, Rue d'Egmont 11

09:45 – 10:30

LECTURE by Ilke Toygür: “The European Parliament and the democratic dimension of the EU”



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EU @ WORK SEMINAR ON AFFAIRS



	Venue: Fondation Universitaire, Room E. Francqui, Rue d'Egmont 11
11:00 – 13:00	VISIT TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT with an official from the European Parliament Venue: European Parliament, Paul Henri Spaak building, Rue Wiertz 60
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH BREAK Venue: EXKI, Rue de la Loi 232-234
14:00 – 17:00	VISIT TO THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE: “Role and priorities of the EEAS and EU’s relations with Turkey”, with an official from the EEAS Venue: European External Action Service, Rond-Point Robert Schuman 9A

FRIDAY 22 NOVEMBER

09:00 – 11:00	GUIDED TOUR OF THE HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY Venue: House of European History, Rue Belliard 135
11:30 – 12:30	LECTURE & DISCUSSION with Ilke Toygür: “Geopolitics of Europe” Venue: Fondation Universitaire, Room E. Francqui, Rue d'Egmont 11
12:30 – 13:00	CLOSING REMARKS AND FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS with Ilke Toygür (Academic Coordinator of the Seminar & Elcano Royal Institute) and Giulia Bonacquisti (TEPSA) Venue: Fondation Universitaire, Room E. Francqui, Rue d'Egmont 11
13:00	FAREWELL LUNCH at Fondation Universitaire



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